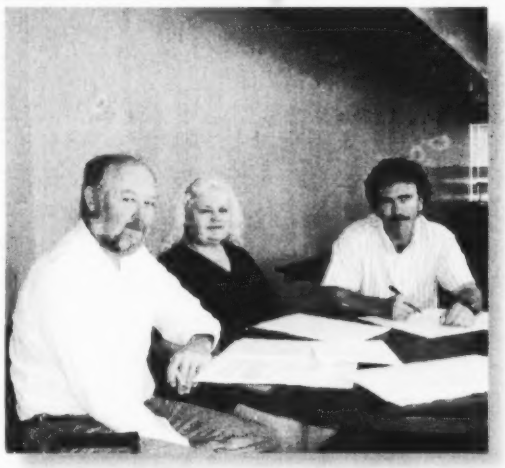
the Bridge
NEWSLETTER of the BRITISH COLUMBIA FIRST NATIONS FORESTRY PROGRAM

First Nation Forestry Program Renewed

The Government of Canada is continuing its support of innovative forestry initiatives in First Nations communities. Robert D. Nault, Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), and Herb Dhaliwal, Minister of Natural Resources Canada (NRCan), announced on April 2, 2002 that the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) will be renewed until March 31, 2003.

The Government of Canada is contributing $4.5 million to support the FNFP over the next year – with INAC providing $2.75 million and NRCan $1.75 million – and will investigate longer-term partnership funding opportunities in order to continue the program. First Nations and the forest industry are the other major funding partners in the implementation of projects.



Art Shortreid, Heather O'Leary and Randy Butcher of the Canadian Forest Service reviewed applications prior to the management committee board meeting.

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On July 4, 2002 the BC FNFP management committee met to review this year's 128 proposals.

"The FNFP has played a major role in creating economic development opportunities and encouraging First Nations to participate in the forest sector," said Minister Nault. "By working in partnership with the corporate sector, First Nations are able to improve the quality of life in their communities and benefit from sustainable resource development."

"During the past six years, the FNFP (nationally) has assisted more than 350 communities and 4,700 First Nations workers, on and off reserve, gain valuable experience in forestry management," said Minister Dhaliwal. "Through this renewed program, First Nations and the Government of Canada can continue to make a real difference in the lives of Aboriginal people in Canada – improving quality of life through sustainable resource development, environmental preservation and economic growth."

The FNFP, open to all First Nations communities in Canada, aims to improve economic conditions in these communities by providing the opportunity to enhance their capacity to manage forests; operate and participate in forest-based businesses; and increase cooperation and partnerships among First Nations. It enables First Nations communities to increase their forestry-related knowledge, capabilities and business skills essential to greater participation in Canada's forest sector. It also investigates mechanisms for financing First Nations forestry development.

Since being established in 1996, the FNFP has supported more than 1,100 projects with $25 million in federal funding and $58 million in partnered funding. About 57 percent of the 610 bands in Canada participate in the program; the majority of these communities are located in rural and remote areas. As the non-Aboriginal workforce ages and as First Nations communities gain more access to forest resources through treaties, land entitlements and court decisions, the FNFP is expected to continue providing opportunities to First Nations.

The FNFP is known for its excellence and achievements. The Treasury Board Secretariat recognized it in its February 2001 Report to Parliament as one of the 12 outstanding programs within the Government of Canada. It was also selected as a successful example of interdepartmental cooperation in the May 2000 report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada.

Note: *Please refer to the last page of this newsletter for a listing of the projects approved for 2002-03 by the British Columbia First Nation Forestry Program.*

Contact: Nello Cataldo, Manager of Collaborative Forestry Programs, (250) 363-6014.

Tseycum First Nation – Forest Health Assessment And Development Planning

The Tseycum First Nation is located on five reserves covering a total of 192.2 hectares on the southern end of Vancouver Island and the adjacent Gulf Islands. The main community is located at Patricia Bay on the northwest side of the Saanich Peninsula.

A few members of the band observed that their lands, forests and environment were healthy and thriving in the past but now the trees were dying. The band wanted to understand what contributed to this change and develop a plan to correct the problem. The First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) provided funding to do a study and develop the plan with a registered professional forester and soils specialist.

The project involved four Tseycum community members who were provided training in identifying the insect and soil conditions that were causing trees to die, in surveying and in some silviculture treatments. The silviculture survey work included a focus on identification, preservation, and enhancement of existing medicinal and traditional-use plant cover. A field inventory lead to the conclusion that the decrease in tree growth was the result of a rising water table. This problem sometimes occurs when trees are removed from wet sites such as what happened here after it was logged in 1964. Water that is normally removed by trees transpiring actually remains in the soil, thus causing what is called paludification, which is the gradual conversion of drylands to wetlands. To help solve the problem their forestry consultant recommended that they leave the majority of the dominant trees standing and to plant openings with water tolerant species such as western red cedar and red alder. These combined measures would help minimize the high soil moisture problem.

Following community consultations and meetings with elders to determine the medicinal uses of some of the identified shrubs, remedial planting of western red cedar and red alder was carried out in some of the clearings, followed by the installation of tree shelters. A traditional-use nature trail was established for future development near the community's long-house. Also, conversations with several of the elders were recorded for future archival and interpretive work.

Seeing enthusiastic Tseycum forestry team members at work on the Reserve led to an increase in community interest. Band administrator, Dorothy Hunt, says, "The whole community came to recognize that the forests were in dire straits and that many problems needed to be paid attention to and be fixed."

Norbert Joe, Art Shortreid (FNFP), Tanya Jones, and Andrea Johnny in a stand requiring brushing and fill planting.

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Aboriginal Forest Industries Council of British Columbia Is Launched

With strong support from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), the Aboriginal Forest Industries Council of British Columbia (AFIC) was officially launched this spring. At a formation meeting in February – attended by over 100 delegates affiliated with some 40 bands – formal bylaws were adopted and an executive committee was elected which will function as AFIC's Board of Directors.

AFIC is designed to be an economic development partner for First Nation forestry businesses whether they are owned or managed by bands or individual First Nations. Its role will be to help forestry businesses in the First Nations community identify the assets required to reach full potential as forest enterprises and secure access to those assets whether they be training, planning, capital, equipment and of course, high-value forest land.

AFIC will undertake these activities as a business promotion agency and will not enter into areas of discussion that are the proper role of First Nation political leadership. In terms of dealing with government, AFIC intends to raise awareness of the vast under-serviced potential of the forest business in the First Nations community. It will encourage the creation of business development programs that are tailored to the diverse needs of the First Nations community.

In two years of consultation leading to the creation of AFIC, it became clear that there was an immediate need for such an organization. Research showed that while First Nations represent over five percent of the BC population, they share less than one percent of the annual allowable cut. While there are close to 4000 professional foresters in BC, only six are aboriginal. Besides such minimal participation, aboriginal forest businesses are small and widely spread around the province. AFIC intends to promote a sharing of best practices among this group.

The AFIC Board includes a group of six First Nation representatives who combine decades of experience in the forest sector. They are Garry Merkel (RPF), Dan Hanuse, Swede Stronquist, Dixon Terbasket, Dave Mannix, and Earl Smith (chair).

A major activity in the coming year will involve a comprehensive needs assessment of the First Nations forestry business in BC. This project will involve surveys, personal consultation and regional meetings. The end product will be the first blueprint of the potential of Aboriginal forestry in the province, clearly pointing to the types of program support that will help the aboriginal community deliver on that potential.

Contact: Victor Godin, AFIC Acting Interim Manager, (604) 264-4474.

Website: www.aficouncil.org

In February 2002 AFIC held their annual general meeting at the UBC House of Learning which was attended by over 100 delegates affiliated with some 40 bands.

Xats'ull First Nation is Developing Memorandums of Understanding To Improve Training and Employment Opportunities

One objective of the First Nation Forestry Program (FNFP) is to increase First Nation's partnerships and joint ventures. This is exactly what the Xats'ull First Nation (XFN) of Soda Creek set out to do by developing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the logging companies operating in their territories.

The Xats'ul First Nation is one of four northern autonomous Secwepemc Nation Bands.

The XFN is one of four northern autonomous Secwepemc Nation Bands which is a member of the Cariboo Tribal Council. It has a growing population of up to 350 people on two reserves located at Deep Creek and Soda Creek, north of Williams Lake on Highway 97. The Xats'ull people once occupied territory from west of the Fraser River to the Rocky Mountains.

The community is forest dependent and wants to build better relationships with major forest companies. Presently, the band unemployment rate is about 68 percent and they see these MOUs as the key to employment, economic growth, and diversification, which will lead to social and economic self-sufficiency. The major forest companies have the resources expertise, contacts, and business experience Xats'ull needs to establish new goals and objectives.

Band councillor of Economic Development, Tourism and Forestry, Cheryl Chapman, says when it come to harvesting activities their territory they would like to take advantage of any opportunities for job training or employment that become available.

Through a previous Forest Community Economic Development (FCED) analysis and a project that reviewed the structure of the band's forestry and forest-related companies, the XFN had developed an understanding of the direction it would like the MOUs to take.

Speaking for Weldwood Canada, Ken Robertson says that they have a good relationship with XFN and that things are always better when everyone can sit down together and talk about it. "Effective communications could mean future training and job opportunities for the band, if the XFN could take advantage of the five percent rollback when there is a transfer of a forest licence."

The official purpose of the MOUs is to facilitate better communication, understanding, and working relationships between the logging companies and the XFN. The MOUs will help the forest companies achieve their forest management goals while assisting Xats'ull to preserve, protect and enhance its economy, culture, and values.

Contact: Cheryl Chapman, Councillor responsible for Economic Development, Tourism and Forestry, (250) 989-2323.

An Dsap Wilp Society, Bear Lake, BC – Working to provide community logging and milling opport

British Columbia Railway bridge crossing the Sustut River. The railway provides the only land access to Bear Lake.

The An Dsap Wilp Society represents a very isolated group of Gitxsan people who fish and hunt in and around Bear Lake, about 100 km north of Takla Landing in north central BC The purpose of this society is to integrate traditional aboriginal knowledge with modern, scientific and technical methods for better management, enhancement and preservation of the lands and natural resources within the traditional territory for education and training to create long term employment opportunities through an on-the-job training strategy. Several years ago, the Gitxsan people came to be associated with the Carrier people of the Takla Lake First Nation located 180-km Northwest of Fort St. James. There are no roads to the Bear Lake area and their only link with the south is the BC Railway.

Given the choice of living off the land and receiving welfare or heading south, many of their people have left for employment in Prince George. Thomas Patrick, president of the An Dsap Wilp Society, would like to see this change. "But, there is no silver platter," says Patrick. "You have to do it yourself."

Over the past year, the An Dsap Wilp Society has been meeting with representatives from the BC Ministry of Forests to discuss the aquisition of a 15-year Forest Licence with an annual allowable cut of 20,000 m^3. The provincial government indicated that a business plan was required as part of the licence application.

With the help of a $25,000 contribution from the First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP) in 2001, the An Dsap Wilp Society completed a business plan for Xuswiiax Forest Products Corporation (Xuswiiax). This is a new company that is being formed primarily to manage this licence. "The challenge will be to ensure that the new operation is both economically viable and ecologically sustainable," says forestry consultant Greg Taylor. They will only build limited winter roads in the area. Logs will be sorted at Bear Lake and hauled out by rail. Extra care will be taken to carefully preserve fish spawning grounds. "We want to make a living and preserve the spawning grounds. This is the beginning of something. This will be like night

unities for the future

and day for the Bear Lake First Nation." Most of the logs will be sold. However, Xuswiiax will retain some for further manufacturing into such things as utility poles, railway ties and timbers. The An Dsap Wilp Society hopes that at least 20 community members will gain employment by establishing a small sawmill, a log lathe and a log home building enterprise.

Since the location of the company is so remote, a satellite communications system was established. Secure communication to and from Bear Lake is a necessity for worker safety and business communications.

First snow on Bear Mountain – October 1, 2001

Xuswiiax met with seven potential joint venture candidates as part of the business development and selected Apollo Forest Products Ltd. to be its partner. This partnership will open up a broad range of opportunities for cooperation relating to Bear Lake's access to Crown Forest Tenures. Following the acquisition of the forest licence, Xuswiiax will apply jointly with Apollo Forest Products Ltd. for additional tenures. Preparation of the official tenure application and the forest harvesting development plan will continue this year.

Combined with the traditional activities of fishing and hunting, this new forestry development initiative should keep the Bear Lake people busy. Patrick hopes that it will attract young people back to the community.

Contact: Thomas Patrick, President, An Dsap Wilp Society, (250) 562-4605.

Consultant Greg Taylor (left), Chief Thomas Patrick and his granddaughter (centre), and pilot about to take a helicopter trip to view timber

The Secwepemc Natural Resource Board – a common voice with respect to natural resources

The SNRB meets monthly to discuss technical natural resource issues.

For a number of years, bands of the Secwepemc Nation have been working towards a common voice with respect to natural resources. This has been especially important in the forest industry. The Secwepemc Natural Resource Board (SNRB) may be that common voice.

The SNRB is an organization developed to discuss technical issues of common concern relating to forest management, planning, and development within the traditional territories of the Secwepemc Nation. Administrator Rick Gilbert notes that the SNRB is not a political organization. "We work in a technical, non-political area."

Secwepemc territory spans a wide geographical area in south-central BC and includes 17 bands. The communities include Adams Lake, Alkali Lake, Bonaparte, Canim Lake, Canoe Creek, Kamloops, Neskonlith, North Thompson, Skeetchestn, Soda Creek, Spallumcheen, High Bar, Little Shuswap, Pavilion, Shuswap, Whispering Pines and Williams Lake Bands.

Last spring, with the help of the Adams Lake Indian Band (who provided office space and administrative support) and a $25,000 contribution from the First Nations Forestry Program, the SNRB was able to establish an office of its own and become a registered non-profit society. A formal operating structure was developed

and along with that they completed essential business and market planning activities.

In addition to the above regional FNFP support, last fall the SNRB received an additional $5,000 contribution from FNFP National Management Committee. These funds were used to assist the Board in holding a two-day workshop with a professional facilitator on how to create a natural resource board. Workshop topics included board planning, possible short-term projects, and the pros and cons of official status as a non-profit society. The workshop was a success and participants left the meeting with a greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the SNRB.

Presently, the SNRB is working on a database that will be able to provide bands and tribal councils with up-to-date information on job and training opportunities. This will expose bands to workshops and training projects that they might not otherwise hear about. "By working as a group," says Gilbert, "we can create more job opportunities in the Secwepemc Nation and we can have better input into the management of forestry resources."

In addition, the SNRB intends to review the immediate forestry training needs for aboriginal communities to market and deliver short-term workshops when and where they are needed. A template for generic Secwepemc human resources, equipment, and skill services will be produced for use in the area of forest management, planning, and development support. They will explore linkages between the SNRB and the First Nations Technical Support Association that was previously funded by the FNFP.

Through the SNRB, help will be available for First Nations people seeking employment, education, and training. Secwepemc youth and women will be encouraged to become involved in the forest sector as an educational choice.

Contact: Rick Gilbert, Administrator, (250) 314-9723.

Website: www.snrb.org

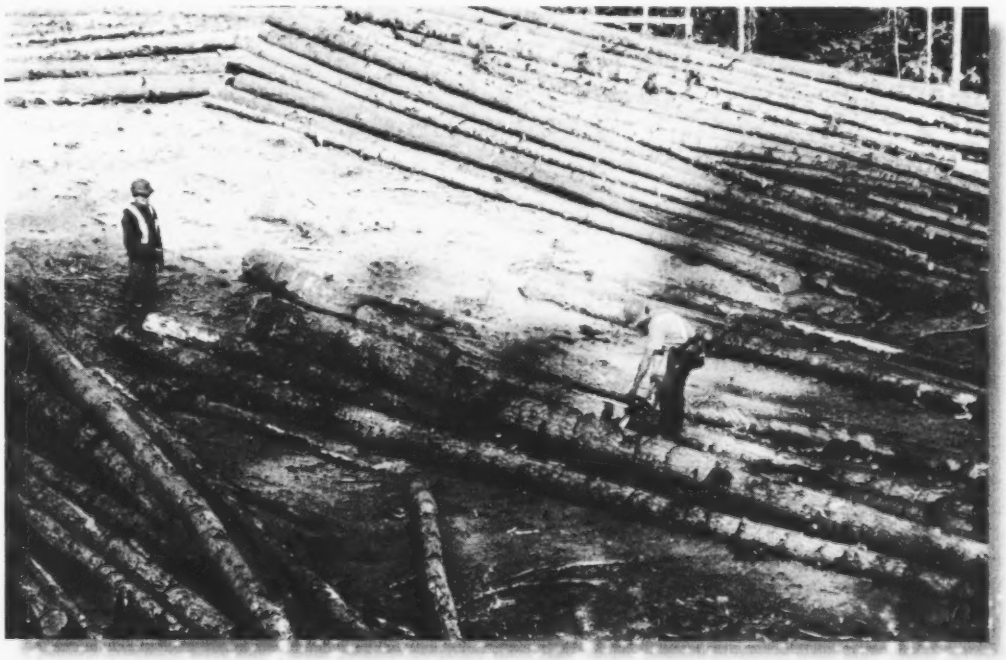
Common Attributes Of Successful Joint Ventures

The First Nation Forestry Program has existed since 1996 funding several joint venture projects. Several of these ventures have been very successful, while others have been less so. Last year, the Canadian Forest Service reviewed 30 previously funded projects specifically involving joint ventures to determine the common attributes of both successful and unsuccessful ventures. The following represents some of the conclusions and recommendations resulting from that review.

- A community should first take an inventory of available labour skills as well as timber types before considering capital equipment investments. Once inventories are complete, a gap analysis that identifies information that is missing may help determine the requirements of a potential partner. Then, through feasibility studies and subsequent negotiations with potential partners, the community can determine how their resources and skills may best be used.

- Outside expertise should only be used to supplement community-based knowledge. If consultants are required, they need to address the community's specific questions rather than follow their own agendas. Consultants don't know the community as well as the community members do and will leave when their portion of the project is finished. It is important that some members of the community work with and learn from the consultant. The use of consultants, however experienced, is not a substitute for a strong and clear community vision.

- Communities need to fully evaluate and realistically value what each party will contribute to the overall success of the project. This can be in the form of



Bucking in landing.

Successful joint ventures (continued from Page 9)

timber or access to other resources, local or business-related expertise, labour skills and funding or access to funds. Such an evaluation can take place at the gap analysis stage or completed during the feasibility study. This information is also required for the preparation of a comprehensive business plan.

- The success of a venture is directly related to the degree of commitment of all involved parties. The community as a whole must take ownership and be accountable for the success of the venture. Political interference within the community must be eliminated as much as possible by separating the operations of the venture from the operations of the community and its representatives (Chief and council). Many communities do this through the use of boards of directors for their development corporations that are independent of the band council.

Some of the FNFP joint venture projects have been extremely successful (in terms of creating employment, accessing timber, businesses created, developing successful relationships with the forest industry, etc.); others have not been quite so fortunate for a variety of reasons.

Long-term success of projects cannot be measured by the project "deliverables" (such as feasibility studies, business plans, or forest tenure proposals). Success in terms of economic development can only be gauged by long-term impacts that the project has had on the community through outcomes such as long-term employment, continued business viability after a number of years, or the state of relationships between the communities and the local non-First Nations forest industry.

Contact: Art Shortreid, First Nations Forestry Program, (250) 363-0702.

Forest Health Assessment And Development Planning (continued from Page 3)

"The really remarkable thing," says Hunt, "was the personal growth in the individuals who formed the forestry team. It did wonders for their self-esteem. This type of funding is so important to small communities; we only hope that it will be continued."

The outcome of completing this work resulted in an enhanced community capacity to manage reserve forestlands and also created employment opportunities for band members. The project resulted in a total of five community members receiving experience in forestry field operations.

The Tseycum First Nation now has a better understanding of what is happening within their lands. They have a Tseycum-made plan to meet their spiritual, economic and development needs. This plan will be complementary to a Traditional-Use Study being worked on by the band and should open doors for Tseycum to negotiate funding from other agencies. They have a trained crew with transferable skills to do basic silviculture work. And they have an environmentally aware community determined to keep their trees, shrubs, medicinal herbs and lands healthy.

Contact: Dorthy Hunt, Band Administrato, (250) 656-0858.

First Nations Forestry Program Project List
(2002–2003 Fiscal Year)

Applicant	Community	Project Title	Board Approved
An Dsap Wilp Society	Prince George	Crown Forest Tenure Acquisition for Xsu Wilax Forest Products Corp.	19,600
Ashcroft First Nation	Ashcroft	Forest and Plant Inventory, Mapping and Opportunity Development Initiative	20,000
Blueberry / Halfway River Band	Fort St. John	TEK Information Management & Collaborative Planning	7,000
Bonaparte Indian Band	Cache Creek	Forest Management, Planning & Development	20,000
Boothroyd Indian Band	Boston Bar	Forested Reserve Land Improvement Project	20,080
Burns Lake Band	Burns Lake	Community Forest Initiative	18,137
Carrier Chilcotin Tribal Council	Williams Lake	Carrier Chilcotin Forestry Initiative	20,000
Cayoose Creek Band	Lillooet	Block Layout Training and Contract Pilot Project	19,752
Chuuta Resources Ltd.	Anahim Lake	Ulkatcho Reserve Lands Forest Resource Management Plan	25,000
Ditidaht Cedar Salvage Ltd.	Port Alberni	Mobile Dimension Sawmill Integration into Ditidaht Forest Products Ltd. Operations	25,000
Esketemc First Nation	Williams Lake	Beetle Control Program	20,000
Gitsegukla Band Council	South Hazelton	Economic Development Coordinator	25,000
Heiltsuk Tribal Council	Bella Bella	Limited Partnership Development	25,000
Ka:yu:k't h'/Che:k:tles7eth Nation	Kyuquot	Woodlot Inventories and Non-Timber Forest Products Feasibility Study/Business Plan	14,500
Kitkatla Band Council	Kitkatla	Kitkatla Forest Development	10,000
Kitsumkalum Band Council	Terrace	Forest Business Feasibility Study & Implementation Plan	19,600
Kwakiutl Band	Port Hardy	Conifer Protection, Cage Reinstallation and Maintenance	25,000
Lake Babine Nation	Burns Lake	Fort Babine Forest Land Management	10,000
Lower Similkameen Indian Band	Keremeos	Silviculture Surveys and Prescriptions on LSIB Reserves	25,000
McLeod Lake Indian Band	McLeod Lake	Greenhouse Transplant & Grow Operation	25,000
Moricetown Band Council	Moricetown	Management Services Contract for Kyah Forest Products Ltd.	25,000
Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation	Gold River	Forest Technician Training Program	5,000
Nak'azdli Band	Fort St. James	Update Existing Road Access Plans and Forest Based Re-inventory	7,840
Namgis First Nation	Alert Bay	Non-timber Forest Products: Building Capacity for Sustainable Development	20,000
Neskonlith Indian Band	Chase	Taking Stock of Community Resources Project	20,600
Nuchatlaht First Nation	Zeballos	Enhancement of Nuchatlaht Capacity to Manage and Develop Reserve Forestry Resources	22,500
Nuxalk Nation	Bella Coola	Nuxalk Value-Added Manufacturing Initiative	10,000
Osoyoos Indian Band	Oliver	Inkameep Forestry Mill Wood Procurement and Training Allowance	25,000
Pavilion Indian Band	Cache Creek	Community Forestry Planning	14,000
Prophet River First Nations	Fort Nelson	TEK Information Management & Collaborative Planning	7,000
Saik'uz First Nation	Vanderhoof	Development of a Timber Harvesting Business/Entity	20,500
Secooksin Enterprises Ltd.	Canim Lake	Expanded Silvicultural Treatment Capacity for Secooksin Enterprises	25,000
Seton Lake Indian Band	Shalalth	Seton Lake Band Forestry	12,500
Silver Grizzly Resource Mgmt. Ltd.	Campbell River	Forestry Climbers Certification	20,000
Siska Indian Band	Lytton	Siska Non-Timber Forest Strategy	25,000
Tobacco Plains Indian Band	Grasmere	Development of an Integrated Resource Management Plan	20,000
Tsawataineuk First Nation	Kingcome Inlet	Forestry Resource Operational Plan 2002/3	25,000
Tsay Keh Dene Band	Prince George	Forestry Training Project	25,000
Tsleil-Waututh First Nation	North Vancouver	Forest Enterprise Development and Management Planning	25,000
West Moberly First Nation	Moberly Lake	TEK Information Management & Collaborative Planning	7,000
Wet suwet en Ent. Ltd.	Moricetown	Combating the Mountain Pine Beetle in NW BC	20,000
Xats'ull First Nation	Williams Lake	Stu-Tin Wood Products	10,000
Xeni Gwet'in First Nation	Nemiah Valley	Tenure Feasibility Study for the Taseko Management Zone	10,000

In partnership with First Nations

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For more information about the First Nations Forestry Program in British Columbia contact the Canadian Forest Service, Pacific Forestry Centre at (250) 363-0600.

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